

# COMMUNICATING ABOUT ANIMAL BIOTECH: Lessons from Two Decades of Crop Biotech Communication

*“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place” George Bernard Shaw*

*Any mention of GMO evokes strong emotions and varied opinions*

## THE MISSES

### 2. Knowledge deficit theory

Factors affecting acceptance:

- Cultural beliefs
- Ethical values
- Lack of inclusivity

### 1. Process versus GM product attributes

- No balance between what the public wants to know versus what they need to know

### 3. Use of technical jargon

- Impeded correct interpretation of technology
- Heightened anxiety on useful innovations

### 4. Over-claimed benefits

- GMOs will feed the world
- GMOs are a silver bullet to ending hunger and poverty

### 5. Scientists and regulators sat back allowing ‘others’ to miscommunicate

- Created room for misinformation, half-truths, myths and mistrust to spread



## LESSONS AND STRATEGIES



### Lesson 1: Trust is king!

Without public trust, potential of new bio-innovations will not be realized!

#### Strategy:

- Develop responsive messages that affirm stakeholders’ values



### Lesson 2: Address stakeholder complexity

#### Strategies:

- Conduct stakeholder analysis and netmapping to understand various needs and/or concerns
- Manage stakeholders with conflicting expectations



### Lesson 3: Frame animal biotech narrative

#### Strategies:

- Apply storytelling techniques when communicating with non-technical audiences
- Use appropriate images



### Lesson 4: Understand the gap

#### Strategies:

- Simplify language to suit target audience
- Begin with the bottom line “So What?”

## GETTING IT RIGHT: BEST PRACTICES



1.

Leverage credible experts as spokespeople, show integrity and shared values – *Scientists can no longer sit back!*



2.

Connect animal biotech interventions to sustainable development goals



3.

Start from evolution of genetic improvement, not **revolution**. *This will help manage stakeholders expectations*



4.

Demonstrate benefits and values that align with public desires



5.

*Share analogies and visuals that people relate to when communicating about animal biotech*